

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

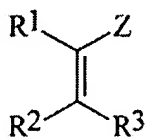
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

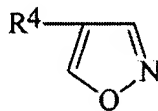
1. **(Currently Amended)** A photothermographic material having, on a support, at least an image-forming layer containing a non-photosensitive silver salt, a photosensitive silver halide and a binder and a protective layer outer than the image-forming layer on the support, and the photothermographic material satisfies at least one of the following Conditions I and II:

Condition I

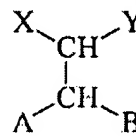
at least one of the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support contains at least one compound selected from compounds represented by the following formula (1), (2) or (3), and the NH_4^+ content in all the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support is 0.06 mmol/m^2 or less:



(1)



(2)



(3)

wherein:

in the formula (1), R^1 , R^2 and R^3 each independently represents a hydrogen atom or a substituent, Z represents an electron-withdrawing group, and R^1 and Z, R^2 and R^3 , R^1 and R^2 , or R^3 and Z may be combined with each other to form a ring structure,

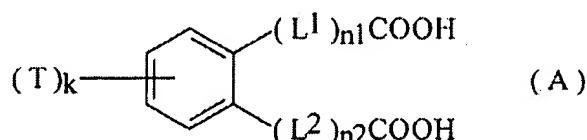
in the formula (2), R^4 represents a substituent,

in the formula (3), X and Y each independently represents a hydrogen atom or a substituent, A and B each independently represents an alkoxy group, an alkylthio group, an alkylamino group, an aryloxy group, an arylthio group, an anilino group, a heterocycloxy group, a heterocyclylthio group or a heterocyclylamino group, and X and Y or A and B may be combined with each other to form a ring structure:

Condition II

at least one of the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support contains a nucleating agent, and at least one of the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support contains at least one compound represented by the following formula (A), and film surface pH of the image-forming layer side of the support is substantially unchanged after coating, and

the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support do not substantially contain ammonia NH_4^+ :



wherein:

in the formula (A), T represents a monovalent substituent, k represents an integer of 0-4; when k is 2 or more, two or more of T may be the same or different from each other or one another and may be bonded together to form a ring; L^1 and L^2 each independently represents a bridging group; and n_1 and n_2 each independently represents an integer of 0-30,

wherein the image-forming layer comprises a ~~polymer~~ SBR latex containing substantially no NH_4^+ .

2. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 1, which satisfies Condition I.

3. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 2, wherein the NH_4^+ content in all the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support is 0.03 mmol/m² or less.

4. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 2, wherein, in the formula (1), Z represents a cyano group, a formyl group, an acyl group, an alkoxycarbonyl group, an imino group or a carbamoyl group, R^1 represents an electron-withdrawing group, and one of R^2 and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom and the other represents a hydroxyl group or a salt thereof, a mercapto group or a salt thereof, an alkoxy group, an aryloxy group, a heterocycloxy group, an alkylthio group, an arylthio group, a heterocyclylthio group, an amino group or a heterocyclic group.

5. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 2, wherein, in the formula (1), Z and R^1 are combined with each other to form a non-aromatic 5- to 7-membered ring structure, and one of R^2 and R^3 represents a hydrogen atom and the other represents a hydroxyl group or a salt thereof, a mercapto group or a salt thereof, an alkoxy group, an aryloxy

group, a heterocycloxy group, an alkylthio group, an arylthio group, a heterocyclylthio group, an amino group or a heterocyclic group.

6. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 2, wherein, in the formula (2), R^4 represents a cyano group, an acyl group, a formyl group, an alkoxycarbonyl group, a carbamoyl group, a sulfamoyl group, an alkylsulfonyl group, an arylsulfonyl group, a sulfonamido group or a heterocyclic group.

7. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 2, wherein, in the formula (3), X and Y are combined with each other to form a ring structure having a total carbon number of 1-35.

8. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 2, wherein, in the formula (3), A and B are combined with each other to form a ring structure having a total carbon number of 3-30.

9. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 1, which satisfies Condition II.

10. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 9, wherein, in the formula (A), k is 0 or 1.

11. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 9, wherein, in the formula (A), two or more of T are bonded to form [3,4]benzo, [4,5]benzo, [4,5]naphtho, [3,4]methylenedioxy or [4,5]methylenedioxy.

12. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 9, wherein, in the formula (A), L^1 and L^2 each independently represents a bridging group of a length corresponding to 0-2 atoms and n_1 and n_2 each independently represents 0-6.

13. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 12, wherein, in the formula (A), L^1 and L^2 each independently represents $-\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2-$, $-\text{C}(=\text{O})-$, $-\text{CONH}-$ or $-\text{SO}_2\text{NH}-$ and n_1 and n_2 each independently represents 0-2.

14. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 9, wherein the film surface pH is 6.0 or less.

15. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 14, wherein the film surface pH is 5.5 or less.

16. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 1, which satisfies both of Conditions I and II.

17. **(Original)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support contains an acid formed by hydration of diphosphorus pentoxide or a salt thereof.

18. **(Original)** A method for forming images, which comprises a step of exposing the photothermographic material according to Claim 1 for a time of 10^{-6} second or less.

19. **(Original)** A method for forming images, which comprises a step of exposing the photothermographic material according to Claim 1 by a multibeam apparatus provided with two or more of laser heads.

20. **(Original)** A method for forming images, which comprises a step of developing the photothermographic material according to Claim 1 by heating at a line speed of 140 cm/min or more.

21. **(Previously Presented)** The photothermographic material according to claim 9, wherein the film surface pH variation after coating is within a range of fluctuation of ± 0.1 .

22. **(Previously Presented)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 1, wherein the NH_4^+ content in all the layers formed on the image-forming layer side of the support is 0.03 mmol/m^2 or less, and wherein the film surface pH is 6.0 or less.

23. **(Previously Presented)** The photothermographic material according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer latex is a rubber resin.

24-25. **(Canceled)**

26. **(Previously Presented)** The photothermographic material of claim 1, wherein at least two protective layers are provided on the image-forming layer, and each protective layer comprises a polymer latex.

27. **(Previously Presented)** The photothermographic material of claim 1, wherein an outermost layer of the image-forming layer side comprises at least one lubricant.

28. **(Currently Amended)** The photothermographic material of claim 1, wherein at least ~~three~~ one protective layer and two overcoat layers are provided on the image-forming layer, and each of the protective layer layers comprises a polymer latex.

29. **(Previously Presented)** The photothermographic material of claim 1, wherein the image-forming layer is made of a coating solution comprising a pH modifier, wherein said coating solution contains substantially no NH_4^+ .

30. **(Previously Presented)** The photothermographic material of claim 29, wherein the pH modifier is NaOH.

31. (New) The photothermographic material of claim 1, wherein the SBR latex is a polymer latex prepared by polymerization using $K_2S_2O_8$ as an initiator.